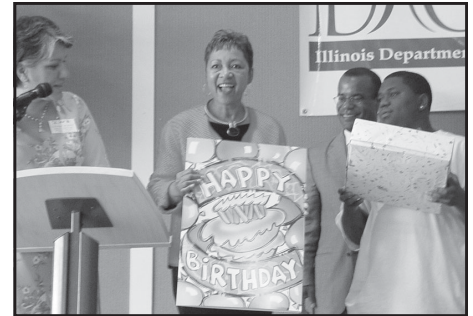


Cook County's scholars move on to college life

The 2004 DCFS Scholarship recipients are adjusting to campus life. Fortunately, they have more than a little help. The scholarship covers tuition and academic costs at any of the nine participating Illinois state institutions and provides a monthly stipend of \$445 and a medical card for up to four years. These students, whose cases are handled in Cook County, were selected from among more than 250 applicants. Their high school achievements and personal resilience will surely help them as they go forward. They also can take with them the pride and good wishes of the caregivers and professionals who continue to offer support.



The Scholarship Celebration was also a birthday celebration for sponsor Connie Payton



Cassie Bradley

Cassie Bradley, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Whitney Young High School. She is now a student at Northern Illinois University with plans of obtaining advanced degrees in both music and business. In high school, she participated in the swim team, tennis, basketball, dance team, and the band. She is an accomplished musician on both the clarinet and saxophone and has earned Chicago All City Band honors for the past two years. Cassie also worked as a lifeguard for the Chicago Park District.

Jamie Brewton

Jamie Brewton, from Chicago, graduated in 2003 from Chicago High School for Agricultural Science. She currently attends Northern Illinois University and plans to become a teacher. In high school, she participated on the tennis and track teams, and was an honor roll student. She played a leadership role for three years in an entrepreneurial program in which students create and manage a natural food product business. Jamie has volunteered in several projects at both her high school and church. She also worked at Art Bell Cleaners.



Devin Brown

Devin Brown, of Chicago, graduated this year from Whitney Young High School where she was on the honor roll every semester. She now attends University of Illinois at Urbana and plans to major in Chemical Engineering. In addition to being recognized in Who's Who Among American High School Students, Devin was inducted into the National Honor Society in 2003. She has served as a Deaconess at her church and worked as a rides hostess at Six Flags Great America.

Kimberly Brown

Kimberly Brown, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Simeon Career Academy. She now attends University of Illinois and plans to major in mathematics and join the Women in Mathematic Science and Engineering Program. In high school, Kimberly's academic honors included the National Honor Society, Academic Decathlon, Principal's Scholar, and Who's Who Among American High School Students. She ranked #17 in her class of 289. She participated in choir, Police Explorers, JROTC, Mayor Daley's Book Club and Girl Scouts, along with many volunteer activities.

Scholarship recipients, con't.



Jeweline Burks

Jeweline Burks is a 2004 graduate from Bogan Computer Technical High School in Chicago. Now she is a student at Western Illinois University, planning a major in mathematics. She was a high school honor student and participated in the Principal's Book Club, Student Council as President, track team, cheerleading, choir, and golf team. Her volunteer activities include tutoring children at the R.B.C. Community Service Center and working with the American Cancer Society on cancer prevention awareness for students. She has worked as a Community Youth Organizer for Southwest Youth Collaborative.

Kyle Carpenter

Kyle Carpenter, a resident of Salem, Virginia, is a 2004 graduate of Glenvar High School. He currently attends Marshal University in West Virginia, pursuing a major in sports management. In high school, Kyle participated in chorus, soccer, basketball, baseball, and the Chapel Committee. His volunteer activities include entertaining at nursing homes, Boy Scouts, and preparing food for stranded airport passengers during the 9/11 tragedy. Kyle worked at Cuisine America and Oberweis Dairy in Illinois and currently is employed in Virginia.



Stephanie Dagen

Stephanie Dagen, of Brookfield, graduated in 2003 from Riverside Brookfield High School. She is currently attending Triton Community College and plans to eventually transfer to Illinois State University or Governor's State University. Her educational goal is to secure a master's degree in speech pathology. In high school, Stephanie was a four-year honors math student and earned a Bronze Award for community service. She also participated in basketball, softball, art club, math team and was a teacher's aide.

Audrey Davis

Audrey Davis, from Chicago, attends the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, planning a major in human development and family studies. She is a 2003 graduate of Dunbar Vocational Career Academy where she participated in the Yearbook Committee, Chorus, and Business Professionals of America. She was an honor roll student and earned recognition on the National Honor Roll and in Who's Who Among American High School Students. She also earned a scholarship from the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church.



Shimeka Gillespie

Shimeka Gillespie, of Chicago, graduated in 2004 from John Hope College Preparatory High School. She attends Northern Illinois University with a major in chemistry and plans to eventually become a nurse. In high school, Shimeka was a Principal's Scholar and a member of the National Honor Society. She participated in the Keystone Club, Student Council, and Senior Council. Her volunteer activities included being a Peer Juror at the District Police Station and a tutor/advisor in her high school. She also worked at the Robert Taylor Boys and Girls Club.



Charles Ingram

Charles Ingram, a Chicago resident, graduated from Leo High School in 2004. He is now pursuing a major in mass communications and media arts at Southern Illinois University. In high school, Charles participated in the Student Council, baseball team, football team and boxing team. He has volunteered as a tutor and monitor's assistant in the after school program at The Academy of St. Benedict the African-Honore Campus, a school he previously attended.



Felicia Johnson

Felicia Johnson, of Chicago, is a 2003 graduate of Curie High School and is currently attending Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. In her first

year of college, she earned all A's. She plans to earn a degree in physical therapy. While in high school, Felicia was a member of the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Science Honor Society, and Art Honor Society. In high school, Felicia participated in band and the Upward Bound Program. She has worked at Kids R Us and the Chicago Urban League.

Lisa Johnson

Lisa Johnson, of Sauk Village, is a 2004 graduate of Bloom Trail High School. She is now studying at Western Illinois University for a degree in forensic science. While in high school, Lisa participated in the Environmental Club, Trails African-American Society, Upward Bound Program, Science Club, and the Latino Club. She was an honor roll student and was inducted into the National Honor Society.



Nicole Kerr

Nicole Kerr, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Queen of Peace High School. She is a student at Western Illinois University, studying criminal justice. In high school, Nicole participated in the Art Club, Junior Class Council, Senior Class Council and the Peace Dance Company. She was on the honor roll for three years. Nicole also volunteers at the local senior citizen home and worked as a cashier at Sears since 2002.



Paris Liberty

Paris Liberty, of Chicago, attends Chicago State University and plans to major in Nursing. Paris is a 2004 graduate of John Hancock High School where she was a cheerleader for two years. Her community service includes participation in the Girl Scouts and her church. She has worked as a Dementia Unit Aide at Alden Park Strathmoor. She is also learning sign language.



Monique McGlory

Monique McGlory, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Crane Tech High School where she ranked 3rd in her class of 214. Monique now attends Northern Illinois University. She plans to become a Registered Nurse, specializing in pediatrics. Her volunteer activities include support of the March of Dimes and working with surgery patients at the Bowman Recovery Center. In high school, Monique served as equipment manager for the football and baseball teams. She was a member of the National Honor Society, National Honor Roll and Who's Who Among American High School Students. She also worked as a sales associate at Target.

Monique Moore

Monique Moore, of Chicago, graduated from the Young Women's Leadership Charter School in 2004. She now attends Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville with a goal to become a nurse. In high school, Monique participated in basketball, the graduation committee and dance group. She was an honor roll student and received the Science Achievement Award. Monique completed the Summer Enrichment Program at Chicago State University receiving certification in English, Math, and Science. She also completed the Emergency Medical Technician Basic course at the Chicago Police-Fire Training Academy.

Daniel Palafox

Daniel Palafox, of Justice, is a 2004 graduate of Argo Community High School. He is now attending Southern Illinois University where he plans to major in business. While in high school, Daniel participated in the Science Club, Chess Club and school newspaper, while enrolled in the honors college preparatory curriculum. He was active in the football, swimming volleyball and track teams. He also volunteered as a student aide for one of his teachers.

Scholarship recipients, con't.



Crystal Reyes

Crystal Reyes, of Chicago, graduated from Von Steuben Metropolitan High School. She is now a student at the University of Illinois. As a high school student, Crystal was on the honor roll and inducted into the National Honor Society. She also participated in basketball, softball, cross-country, track and field, and the Latino Club. In addition, she worked at Park Place Towers.



Bertha Sharp

Bertha Sharp, a resident of Evanston, graduated in 2004 from Evanston Township High School. Now, she attends Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, majoring in social work. She was awarded the Young Woman's Leadership Award and the Most Improved Student Award in high school. Bertha also participated in softball, basketball, Principal's Advisory Club, and the Community Service Club. Bertha has volunteered at her church and as a tutor at Dewey Elementary School. She also worked at Blockbuster Video.

Amanda Sikora

Amanda Sikora, formerly of Lemont, is a resident of Orlando, Florida. She is a 2004 graduate of Dr. Phillips High School where she was an honor student. In high school Amanda participated in Soccer, Symphonic Band, Key Club, and the Marine Science Club. Her volunteer activities include rebuilding houses with her church group and the Give Kids the World Program, a resource for terminally ill children and their families. Amanda attends Florida State University and majors in Accounting/Marketing.



Sharde Snyder

Sharde Snyder, of Chicago is a 2004 graduate of North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School. Sharde is now a student at Lewis University where she is studying nursing. In high school, Sharde participated in the

Class Senate, choir, Student Disciplinary Court, and the Big Sister Program. In addition to being an honor roll student, Sharde volunteers at her church in the Greater Kids Ministry, interned with a pediatrician at Children's Memorial Health Clinic, and worked as a cashier at Taco Bell.

Dajuana Starks

Dajuana Starks, of Chicago, graduated from Austin High School. She currently attends the University of Illinois at Chicago with a major in Chemistry. Her goal is to become a Doctor. In high school, Dajuana participated in the French Club, JROTC, Student Government, Bulls' Scholar Program, and was Senior Class President. She was inducted into the National Honor Society and Who's Who Among American High School Students. She was ranked 5th in her class of 255. Dajuana also held employment at Cub Foods.

Olga Steele

Olga Steele, formerly of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Whitewater High School in Wisconsin. She now attends University of Wisconsin in Whitewater and plans to major in english or the humanities. Her goal is to earn a master's degree in library science and become a librarian. In high school, Olga participated in Key Club, Academic Decathlon, Model United Nations and Peer Tutoring. Olga, who was ranked 11th in her class of 176, was inducted into the National Honor Society. She worked at Sonda's Restaurant and gained managerial responsibilities, including training employees.



Montrice Wade

Montrice Wade, a Chicago resident, is a 2004 graduate of Hirsch Metro High School. She now attends the University of Illinois where her goal is to receive her masters in Business Administration. At Hirsh, Montrice ranked #1 in her class of 116. Her many academic awards include National Honor Society, A Honor Roll for four years and Who's Who Among American High School Students. She participated in the Law and Public Safety Academy, Student Council, Academic Decathlon, and the basketball team. Her volunteer activities include American Heart Association and

internships at the Cook County Circuit Court of Domestic Violence and Chicago Public Schools Department of Law.



Precious Watson

Precious Watson, a Chicago resident, graduated from Lindbloom College Preparatory High School in 2003. She currently attends Chicago State University and earned a place on the Dean's List in her freshman year. Her goal is to receive a master's degree in Nursing. In high school, Precious earned a 4.2 on a 4.0 grade point system. She was a member of the National Honor Society, Beta Club, School Choir, and Student Council.

Precious Wright

Precious Wright, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Walter Payton College Preparatory High School. She is now pursuing a major in biology at Northwestern with the goal of going to medical school. Precious' academic awards included: Who's Who Among American High School Students, Ventures Scholar, Skull Award from Leadership Conference on Medicine and Health Care, and Salute to Academic Achievement Award. Precious volunteered for an environmental science project on water pollution at DePaul University. She completed a work internship at DePaul as an organic chemistry assistant working with purification of monomers and polymers.

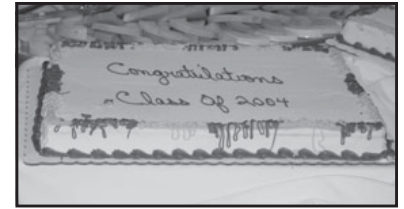


Tikiya Young

Tikiya Young, of Chicago, is a 2004 graduate of Kenwood Academy High School. Now she is a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago with plans to major in mass communications in preparation for her career in journalism. Her high school academic honors include being named to the Principal's Honor Roll. Tikiya's extracurricular activities included All City Art Exhibition medal winner, 4-H Club, Mayor Daley's Book Club, Junior Mentor and Swim Team. Tikiya's volunteer activities include the Big Sister Program, Teacher's Aide and several church programs. She was also employed as a day camp counselor and an apprentice artist in the area of performance poetry.

Cook South Graduation Celebration of 04

More than 150 youth saw their names proudly printed in the program for the Cook South Graduation Celebration.



These were students from DCFS and private agencies who had graduated from high school, college, received a GED, or completed the requirements of a trade school. Cook South Region foster parents and staff provided care and services for over 30 of these graduates.

Cook South's caregivers and staff celebrated their achievements on July 23 at the Harambee House with food, music, and entertainment. The guest speaker for this joyous occasion was the Honorable Judge Rodney Brooks, who spoke of career choices and provided words of encouragement. These youths were making the right choices.

Cook South welcomes a new program manager

Sherylyn Heard Smith joined the Cook South administrative staff in August as its new program manager. Her main role is to supervise the activities of the Field Service Managers, who are responsible for direct service to families.

"My goal is to assure foster parents receive supportive services as needed, and that foster parents and our children requiring substitute care are appropriately matched," said Smith.

Smith joined DCFS in 1983 as a Child Protection Investigator. With experience in many positions, she spent the past four years as a Quality Assurance Specialist in Cook Central.

Smith believes that foster parents must continually be recognized as part of the professional triad that strives to assure permanency for each child in this system. She can be reached at 773-371-6014.

Cook North celebrates with our graduates

On July 30th, The Cook North Youth Advisory Board hosted the annual celebration honoring all of the region's graduates. Youth who graduated from high school, college, vocational programming or obtained their GED were invited to participate in the celebration held in the conference room at 1911 S. Indiana. The event was attended by close to 100 people including the graduates, their guests, regional staff and administration as well several DCFS deputy directors.

The Honorable Judge Patricia Martin-Bishop was the keynote speaker and she encouraged the youth to continue on with their education and vocational choices. Betty, Youth Advisory Board vice president shared words of encouragement through the reading of a poem titled "Don't Quit." The festivities included a buffet dinner catered by Orly's Restaurant in Hyde Park.



Betty, Youth Advisory Board vice-president, shared the poem "Don't Quit" with Cook North graduates.



Nearly 100 graduates, their family and fans gathered to celebrate the students' scholastic accomplishments.

Entertainment was provided by inspirational rap and poetry artists "3 Brothers and a Mic" (as in microphone). They performed several pieces that told stories about the struggles the men encountered and the ways they faced their challenges. Many youth identified with the performers, who stayed to talk with the graduates after the performance.

Every graduate in attendance was recognized for their achievement with a certificate as well as gift cards to Foot Locker and Sears.

Plans for our graduates vary. Some are going to work part-time or full-time at jobs such as UPS, in a day care and enlisting in the military. Other youth have plans to attend college. The region, administration and staff want to wish all graduates of the Class of 2004 much success as they continue pursuing their career or educational goals.

Cook Central announces new RA



Petra Porras

Cook Central has a new Regional Administrator. Petra Porras took the reins in August. Ms. Porras is ready to serve Cook Central with its diverse mix of cultures and family experiences. She comes to the new role after a year as the DCFS Chief of Latino Services. Before joining the Department, Porras built a career working with underprivileged families in many low-income communities in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. Through her work she has held to the belief that positive outcomes can happen when you seek out the best resources and put them to good use.

"I am very happy to be back on the West Side and look forward to renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. I know that Cook Central staff is as smart, dedicated and professional as they come and our private agencies are some of the best in the state. It is a privilege and an honor to be working together for all of our families."

Porras has already made a point of getting to know the caregivers in the region, introducing herself at the Regional Advisory Council meeting in August, and planning to continue getting acquainted with all stakeholders. She can be reached at 773-292-7719.

Wrong Region's News?

Illinois Families Now and Forever publishes four regional inserts to the main newsletter:

- Cook County Advocate
- Northern News
- Central Connections
- Our Kids (Southern region)

If you are not receiving the newsletter with the correct regional insert, it may be that DCFS does not have adequate address information on file. Based on calls to the Editor, it seems that this could keep many families from receiving local news. In most cases, the correction is just a quick update to the DCFS computer system.

If your household is not receiving the appropriate regional insert, contact Cheryl Singley in DCFS Central Licensing at 217-785-2688 or csingley@idcfs.state.il.us.

Cook County Advocate

Regional Reporters:

Cook North ~ Sari Rowitz

312-328-2484 office
312-328-2688 fax
SRowitz@idcfs.state.il.us
1911 S. Indiana Ave.
Chicago, IL 60616

Cook Central ~ Donna Cain

773-292-7937 office
773-292-7861 fax
DCain@idcfs.state.il.us
3718 W. Division
Chicago, IL 60651

Cook South ~ Bobby Evans

773-371-6146 office
773-371-6065 fax
BEvans@idcfs.state.il.us
6201 S. Emerald
Chicago, IL 60621

DCFS Operations Exec explains local cuts with other supports in place

To our foster parents in Cook County:

The Illinois Legislature reduced the DCFS annual budget by \$77 million recently. All levels within our agency were asked to work smarter and more focused at the "essentials only" level of delivery. This resulted in cuts in some contracts. Since our population of children in care has fallen below 19,000 we have realigned our energies and resources to focus on quality instead of quantity. One difficult, but necessary, cut was to reduce the level of Foster Parent Support Specialists. These individuals work with families in DCFS-supervised foster homes.

The foster parent support specialist role will continue in the regions. Coverage is being realigned and some activities are being eliminated or shifted to other areas of the department. These changes will allow the remaining foster parent support specialists to focus on homes in which our children and youth are placed.

If you have questions about these changes or are unsure who your foster parent support specialist is please call on the Lead Support Specialist in your region:

Cook Central

Adrienne Welenc, 773-292-7879

Cook North

Mattie Brown, 312-328-2572

Cook South

708-210-2833

Many other support programs for foster parents remain in place. DCFS will continue with the Foster Parent training modules required for re-licensing and available to new licensing applicants for skill building. New course offerings are underway (see article on page 8). Caregivers can also participate in the regional advisory councils and the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Additionally, the information shared in this periodical serves to inform caregivers of significant events, program changes and resource information. Finally, caregivers will of course continue to receive active support from the caseworkers assigned to the children in their homes. If you are experiencing problems that are not being addressed by your caseworker please contact the supervisor or manager for assistance.

Although fostering children will continue to challenge many homes and communities, DCFS will continue to provide supports to both. In the year ahead, we are committed to providing even more developmental services to foster homes throughout the state. We highly value our caregivers and will not lose sight of your immeasurable contribution to the children and families we all serve.

Sincerely,
Arthur Bishop, DCFS Deputy Director for Operations

DCFS Contact Information

Chicago

Headquarters

100 West Randolph Street
6-200
Chicago IL 60601
312-814-6800
TTD 312-814-8783

Springfield

Headquarters

406 East Monroe Street
Springfield IL 62701-1498
217-785-2509
TTD 217-785-6605

Child Abuse Hotline

800-25-ABUSE

Missing Child Helpline

866-503-0184

Advocacy Office

800-232-3798

Day Care Information

877-746-0829

Foster Parent Hotline

800-624-KIDS

Inspector General

800-722-9124

Youth Hotline

800-232-3798

New trainings coming on asthma, sexual behavior problems and policy updates

The schedules for in-service training had to be put on hold due to the state budget delays. However, the Office of Training stayed busy developing new offerings for caregivers. Look for updated schedules in the next issue of the newsletter or contact the DCFS training college.

Asthma training

This new foster parent in-service training on caring for children with Asthma is based on training initially developed by the Office of the Inspector General for child welfare staff. Asthma is a chronic disease that affects many children and requires environmental and medical management by caregivers. It is the most common chronic illness in children, the leading cause of school absenteeism and is the third leading cause of hospitalization in children under age 15. It is estimated that between 12% and 25% of wards have Asthma. The two and one-half hour in-service training will address the implications of caring for children with Asthma.

Understanding and Working with Children with Sexual Behavior Problems

This two-day training which was developed at the request of caregivers will be provided in a team setting and introduce sweeping new changes in philosophy, policy and service delivery when supporting children with sexual behavior problems. Review and feedback of the curriculum by foster parents and the High End

SBP Committee has already been completed. Plans for additional review of the curriculum are being made. A pilot training may be scheduled for this winter.

Updated information from DCFS

The new in-service training module will focus on keeping caregivers informed of new programs, initiatives and changes to DCFS Rule and Procedure. The module will be updated frequently. The classroom time required to complete this module has not been determined yet. This training was piloted at the DCFS Cook North region earlier this year. The content includes:

- Identifying how foster parents support achieving desired outcomes for children in their care
- Applying specific behaviors and actions that are included in the PRIDE competencies toward achieving permanency
- Introducing the Illinois Model of Integrated Assessment and the changes it brings to child welfare practice
- Connecting the results of the Integrated Assessment to the process for developing a comprehensive Family Service Plan
- Identifying changes in child welfare practice associated with the Client Service Planning Process

For more information, contact Harold Washington College at 312-553-5821 or 553-3031.